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UNCLAS ROME 002308

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FROM THE U.S. MISSION TO THE UN AGENCIES IN ROME

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TAGS: [EAID](#) [AORC](#) [KJUS](#) [KISL](#) [IDLO](#)

SUBJECT: IDLO ASSEMBLY OF STATES MEETING: JUNE 28, 2005

1. Summary: the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) held its triennial Assembly of States meeting on June 28. Among the resolutions and recommendations adopted, one changed the frequency of meetings to biennial vice triennial, while another called upon member states to examine the possibility of regular contributions to the core budget of the organization. France was elected chair of the next Assembly (2007). End summary.

2. The International Development Law Organization held its triennial Assembly of States meeting on June 28. The meeting, held on the premises of the Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO), was attended by 17 of the 18 member states. After the adoption of the agenda, opening addresses were given by the Chair of the Assembly (Austria), the Chair of the Board of Directors (a retired AmCit lawyer) and by IDLO Director General William (Bill) Loris. Included in the morning session was a review of an external evaluation of IDLO, carried out in 2004 by a Swedish management consultant and a Norwegian law professor and based on a 2004 request of NORAD (Norwegian aid agency) and SIDA (Swedish aid agency).

3. The idea behind the evaluation was to "assess the relevance and quality" of IDLO programs with a view toward providing a basis for the future direction of the organization. Basic conclusions were that IDLO has been expanding for the last few years and needs to do a better job of defining itself, its 'market' and what it wants to accomplish. That type of focus adds the benefit of making the organization more attractive to potential donors. Loris responded to the evaluation in his presentation of IDLO's strategy paper for the years 2005

2007. IDLO has already made some strides through strategic planning and a SWOT analysis, Loris said. They will continue to concentrate on rule of law issues, good governance and other goals of the Millennium Declaration, specifically judicial reform, business, commercial and financial law, and public international trade and intellectual property law. IDLO will also focus on how to channel the organization's strengths and intellectual expertise through the use of other "delivery mechanisms" (distance learning, etc.) thereby expanding their reach and reputation. Naturally, Loris said, this will take resources in addition to strategic planning, in order to build an efficient and effective infrastructure.

4. The presentation of the organization's finances provided a picture of expansion, both in revenues as well as expenses. The overall budget for 2005 is approximately seven million dollars. Revenues exceeded expenses for the three years 2002 2004, but IDLO will show a slight deficit for 2005. The deficit does not take into account any spending from the endowment fund, currently valued at about 15 million dollars (the endowment received a hefty \$2 million donation in 2004 from the Gates Foundation). Revenues continue to grow as do expenses as the organization expands its mission. About two thirds of the revenues are program-specific, with about one-third unrestricted. That balance and the organization's perceived need for more core (unrestricted) funding were emphasized during the budget presentation and throughout the day (see para 6 below regarding the Italian proposal for assessed contributions). IDLO will also continue to solicit donations from both inside and outside government (including individuals and corporations).

5. The Assembly adopted three resolutions calling on IDLO to focus its efforts in support of the Millennium Declaration (including USDEL-suggested wording changes which put the focus on the Declaration rather than the unadopted Millennium Development Goals); calling on the UN to seek ways to cooperate with IDLO and take advantage of the organization's expertise; and calling on IDLO to report the details of all non-governmental contributions. A fourth resolution was adopted which increases the frequency of Assembly meetings from once every three

years to once every two years. The Assembly briefly debated a French proposal for annual meetings before deciding on a biennial approach (USDEL supported biennial meetings). The Assembly also adopted four recommendations: laying out a set of principles for legal and technical assistance; expressing support for IDLO alumni associations; encouraging states to become member nations of IDLO; and encouraging Egyptian and Australian support for the IDLO training centers in Cairo and

Sydney.

16. Finally, the Assembly adopted two declarations. The first was simply an expression of thanks to IDLO supporters. The second, a late addition from the Italian delegation, was a proposal for member states to study the possibility of regular, assessed contributions. The draft included a categorization table ranging from a minimum contribution of less than 100,000 euros for some states to a maximum of over 500,000. USDEL, supported by Australia and others, spoke against the proposal and reiterated U.S. support of program-specific funding while recognizing the valuable work of the organization. Compromise language was eventually agreed on, deleting the entire second article of the declaration (which contained the categorization table) and asking only that states 'examine the possibility' of making a regular contribution to IDLO, something that the Department is already doing.

17. France, the only candidate, was elected Chair of the next Assembly in 2007. Georgia was admitted as a new member state.

18. Comment: given the importance now given in the development community to rule of law and good governance and considering the growth of IDLO over the past few years, triennial meetings are far too infrequent to exert any member state influence over the day to day operations of the organization. We can envision a day (soon) when the Assembly will meet at least annually. Notwithstanding IDLO's repeated appeals for additional unrestricted funding, the organization is in better financial shape than most comparable intergovernmental bodies. In addition, the 2004 external evaluation helped the organization to focus on its core values and mission. As a result, IDLO has both feet firmly planted on the bandwagon of the Millennium Declaration goals, particularly those focused on rule of law and good governance. Program successes, particularly in Afghanistan (post-Taliban training of judicial sector personnel), have brought the organization increased notoriety and resources. We believe IDLO could be a valuable partner in the promotion of U.S. foreign policy goals related to development.

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2005ROME02308 - Classification: UNCLASSIFIED